DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 215 152 CE 031 911

AUTHOR Ruff, Richard D.; And Others
TITLE An Examination of Non-Occupationally Specific Outcomes of Secondary Vocational Education.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Dec 81
CONTRACT 300-78-0032
NOTE 25p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Assessment; Educational Planning; Educational Research; Educational Trends; Futures (of Society); *Job Skills; *Job Training; *Outcomes of Education; *Policy Formation; *Program Evaluation; Relevance (Education); Research Needs; Secondary Education; *Vocational Education; Work Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The purpose of secondary vocational education has traditionally been occupational preparation, with the primary activity for achieving that purpose being occupationally specific skill training. Today, however, a significant amount of effort is also directed toward outcomes that prepare an individual for work rather than for a specific job or occupation, or outcomes that relate to satisfaction in life roles other than wage earner. These non-occupationally specific outcomes call for an examination of the issues for vocational education policy formulation. Four major types of non-occupationally specific outcomes can be identified: vocational knowledge and maturity; employability skills; consumer and other self-help skills, and citizenship and leadership. Some of the major implications of giving increased legitimacy and emphasis to non-occupationally specific outcomes include the following: (1) such an increase could lead to a one-to-one reduction of funds for occupationally specific skill training; (2) concern about tracking or restricting the future choices of students should be reduced, making vocational education more appealing to more students; (3) more emphasis may be placed on the needs of disadvantaged students; (4) business/industry may view this shift in emphasis as an attempt to be more responsive to their needs--or they may complain about youth's lack of specific skill training; and (5) program content may change. Federal policy options concerning non-occupationally specific vocational education include expanding the federal definition of vocational education; encouraging experimentation and demonstration; encouraging interdisciplinary courses; and encouraging research. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED215152

AN EXAMINATION OF NON-OCCUPATIONALLY SPECIFIC OUTCOMES OF SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Richard D. Ruff
Jerry P. Walker
Bruce J. Shylo
Mollie N. Orth
Jeannette L. Fraser

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Linda Pfister

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

December 1981

CE 031 911

FUNDING INFORMATION

Project Title:	National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Information for Planning and Policy Development Action
Contract Number:	300780032
Project Number:	051MH10012
Educational Act Under Which the Funds were Administered:	Education Amendments of 1976, P.L. 94-482
Source of Contract:	U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education Washington, DC
Contractor:	The National Center for Research in Vocational Education The Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio 43210
Executive Director:	Robert E. Taylor
Disclaimer:	This publication was prepared pursuant to a contract with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgement in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official U.S. Department of Education position or policy.
Discrimination Prohibited:	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Public Law 92-318 states: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Therefore, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education Project, like every program or activity receiving financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education must be operated in compliance with these laws.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	2
Enhancing Vocational Knowledge and Maturity	3
Developing Employability Skills	5
Consumer and Other Self-Help Skills	7
Citizenship and Leadership	7
Summary	8
POLICY IMPLICATIONS	8
ALTERNATIVE FEDERAL POLICY OPTIONS	13
Expand the Federal Definition	13
Encourage Experimentation and Demonstration	14
Encourage Interdisciplinary Courses	14
Encourage Research	14
SUMMARY	15
REFERENCES	17

FOREWORD

During the months ahead Congress will be examining the legislation governing vocational education. This paper is intended to provide information related to the outcomes of secondary vocational education to those who will be involved in that process. It is the third in a series of policy information papers which are being developed by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education during 1981.

A number of people have generously contributed their time and thoughts to the development of this paper; a special appreciation is extended to: Connie Daniels, Pima County Career Guidance Project; Fred Haddad, Connecticut State Department of Education; Edwin Herr, Pennsylvania State University; and Mavis Kelly, Iowa Department of Public Instruction.

Special appreciation is also extended to the National Center project staff members in the Evaluation and Policy Division: Richard Ruff, Project Director; Morgan V. Lewis, Program Director of the Planning and Policy Unit; N.L. McCaslin, Associate Director; Jeannette Fraser, Mollie Orth, Bruce Shylo, and Jerry Walker, project staff. Special assistance was provided by Kathie Medley, Typist; Janet Kiplinger, Editor; and other members of the National Center staff who reviewed early drafts of the paper.

The funds for this effort were provided by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of secondary vocational education has traditionally been occupational preparation with the primary activity for achieving that purpose being occupationally specific skill training. Although the central purpose has remained unchanged, a significant amount of effort in secondary vocational education is also directed toward outcomes that prepare an individual for work rather than a specific job or occupation, or outcomes that relate to satisfaction and productivity in life roles other than wage earner. These non-occupationally specific outcomes tend not to be reflected in the labor market indexes traditionally used to evaluate vocational education.

The evaluative criterion issue and the fact that at least 50 percent of the students in secondary vocational education are enrolled in non-occupationally specific offerings are two of a variety of reasons that make an examination of the issues related to this area important for vocational education policy formulation.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the issues by examining the propriety and feasibility of giving increased legitimacy and emphasis to outcomes that are non-occupationally specific. The examination is divided into three major topics: (1) a discussion of the type of activities that are traditionally classified as non-occupationally specific, (2) a delineation of some of the implications of giving increased legitimacy and emphasis to non-occupationally specific outcomes, and (3) a discussion of alternative federal policy options. In regard to the first topic, four major types of non-occupationally specific outcomes are discussed: (1) vocational knowledge and maturity, (2) employability skills, (3) consumer and other self-help skills, and (4) citizenship and leadership.

The implications of giving increased legitimacy and emphasis to non-occupationally specific outcomes are delineated under five general topics: (1) diversity, (2) productivity, (3) equity, (4) accountability, and (5) implementation. Some of the major implications are highlighted below:

- A major implication of placing increased emphasis on non-occupationally specific outcomes is that such an increase could lead to a one-to-one reduction in occupationally specific skill training--one more dollar for employability skill training is simply one less dollar for updating the equipment in the machine shop. Some would argue that such a result would have two major negative implications: (1) a loss for those for whom high school is the last likely opportunity for formal occupationally specific skill training, and (2) a loss of a

separate identity for vocational education and, hence, a loss of support. Would, they ask, vocational education receive the same financial support without the identity of separate program areas such as agriculture? On the other hand, some would argue that such a result would have major positive implications related to bringing about a major redefinition of secondary vocational education. The redefinition is based on the assumption that occupational preparation in the future will require a broader focus than technical skill training for a specific job or occupation--and an assumption that gives explicit recognition to vocational education's contribution to an individual's future productivity in roles other than that of gainfully employed worker.

- The extent to which these outcomes are emphasized--independent of the effort in occupationally specific skill training--there should be less concern about tracking or restricting the future choices of students. As a result, vocational education should be more appealing to those students and parents who have previously thought that vocational education neglected the education of the "whole" individual and/or restricted the chances for subsequent education or high level jobs. It is, therefore, likely that a higher proportion of secondary students would be attracted to vocational education and, consequently, a higher proportion would exit high school with a background in the work skills needed for employment.

- An increased emphasis is likely to lead to a secondary effort which would be more sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged students. By definition, many of these students have not been exposed to the skills and attributes implied in such outcomes as leadership, occupational maturity and self-help behaviors. This could be particularly important in the coming decade because a higher proportion of secondary age students will be from hard-to-educate/hard-to-employ population groups.

- An increased emphasis is likely to be viewed by employers as an effort on the part of the public education system to be more sensitive to the expressed needs of business/industry since the lack of motivation, poor work habits and a misunderstanding of work place requirements are educational deficencies frequently noted by employers. This, in turn, should provide, at least in some cases, an improved base upon which to construct linkages between education and business/industry.

- Much of the work available for youth in their teenage years are "youth-type" jobs which serve as a three to five year transition period before real employment is available. Employers, especially the larger corporations, tend not to hire youth before the age of twenty in "regular" jobs (Barton 1980). If an increased emphasis in the nonoccupational areas were to supplant the efforts in occupationally specific skill training, then ironically the emphasis could result in a further extension of what may be a self-fulfilling prophecy--youth don't have the skills to hold responsible jobs. This implication is based on the assumption that the old adage: "Give us young people with appropriate work attitudes and basic skills and we'll train them on the job" is only partially true; that is, employers really want both.

- As indirectly referred to earlier under the first consequence, an increased emphasis on non-occupationally specific outcomes could, over time, decrease the distinction between vocational education and other high school curricula. However, as opposed to the previously noted implication of a loss of support for vocational education due to the loss of a separate identity, a scenario could evolve where it was not so much a matter of vocational education losing its identity and moving in the direction of the general and college preparatory curricula; but instead more a matter of the three curricula converging. Under this scenario, the distinguishing feature of vocational education would become more one of the methods used to deliver instruction, rather than one of the content of instruction.

- Increased resources would have to be committed to developing and instituting new accountability measures. Explicit endorsement of the position that non-occupationally specific outcomes are separate from or at least supplemental to job placement would encourage the utilization of new evaluative criteria in addition to the existing labor market indicators.

- An increased emphasis on non-occupationally specific outcomes is likely, over time, to change the basic methods and assumptions used by vocational educators to identify program content. More effort would be directed toward developing an understanding of the social and organizational environments of work places. In looking more broadly at the settings in which work is performed, the criteria for identifying content would extend beyond considerations such as the criticality of tasks and the speed, accuracy, and safety by which the tasks should be performed, to concerns such as interpersonal

compatibility, individual growth opportunities, respect for worker and employer rights, and ethical work behavior.

In the final section of the paper, alternative federal policy options are discussed. The options are described within a conditional context; that is, the sentiment at the federal level may or may not be one of wanting to encourge, endorse or support the non-occupationally specific role of secondary vocational education. Four policy options are discussed: (1) expanding the federal definition of vocational education, (2) encouraging experimentation and demonstration, (3) encourging interdisciplinary courses, and (4) encouraging research.

INTRODUCTION

Public secondary vocational education has traditionally had occupational preparation as its central purpose with occupationally specific skill training being the primary activity for achieving that purpose. Accompanying this educational structure has been the rationale that some economic advantage is bestowed on vocational education students. Thus, expectations and accountability procedures for vocational education have typically focused on job placement as the evaluative criterion. The comparative standard has usually been some economic labor market index such as rate of employment, wages, or continuity of employment. Outcomes that are supplemental to or separate from those of job placement have been categorized under various rubrics such as alternative, noneconomic, or non-occupationally specific. (Because it appears to be the most descriptively accurate, the term non-occupationally specific will be used in this paper.)

Although its central purpose has remained unchanged, a significant amount of effort in secondary vocational education is also directed toward outcomes that prepare an individual for work rather than for a specific job or occupation, or outcomes that relate to satisfaction and productivity in life roles other than wage earner. These outcomes tend not to be reflected in the classic labor market indexes such as rates of employment. Indeed, questions concerning these outcomes probably would not be posed if they were readily reflected by economic labor market indicators, but for several reasons, the situation is not that straightforward.

Given the reality that vocational education is a varied enterprise, the central issue in discussing the outcomes of secondary vocational education is one of accountability--accountability in its broadest sense. Since for many students, high school will be their last formal educational experience--what should be taught to secondary vocational education students? What is the most appropriate mix between training related to specific occupations and training for work? To what extent should vocational education emphasize outcomes that address satisfaction and production in life roles other than wage earner? What policies should the federal government adopt in regard to the role of public secondary vocational education?

The purpose of this paper is to explore such questions by examining the propriety and feasibility of giving increased legitimacy and emphasis to outcomes that are non-occupationally specific. As a part of that examination, the next section gives an overview of the major activities of secondary vocational education that can be included under the rubric of non-occupationally specific outcomes and provides an indication of the

magnitude of the effort committed to those activities. The magnitude issue is pursued from two perspectives. The extent to which the federal government emphasizes these outcomes in the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments is described, and where national data are available, an indication is provided as to the number of students involved in these types of training activities. In the third section the propriety and feasibility questions are addressed by examining some of the implications of giving increased legitimacy and emphasis to the non-occupationally specific outcomes. In the final section, a conditional discussion is presented--if the federal government elects to emphasize non-occupationally specific outcomes in future legislation, what are some of the alternative policy options for pursuing that emphasis?

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this section is to delineate some of the major activities being carried out in secondary vocational education that do not relate directly to training for a specific job or occupation. The section is not an exhaustive discussion of all such activities, but instead highlights the major efforts and provides an indication of the order of magnitude of those efforts. For discussion purposes the activities are categorized into four groups: (1) vocational knowledge and maturity, (2) employability skills, (3) consumer and other self-help skills, and (4) citizenship and leadership. In each case, a definitional discussion is presented, along with information and data that provide an indication of the extent of the federal emphasis on that group of activities and the number of students involved.

As a caution, it should be noted that reporting national data for vocational education poses several problems. The figures will vary depending on the definitions, assumptions, and techniques used in reporting them. In the preparation of this section, an attempt was made to minimize the data problem by using large-scale national data bases. The three main data sources were the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experiences--New Youth Cohort (men and women, age seventeen to twenty-one, n=12,686), High School and Beyond (high school seniors, n=28,240, and sophomores, n=30,030), and the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS).

It should also be pointed out that a substantial diversity in the nature of vocational programs exists among and within states; that is, an industrial arts program in New York City will be different in varying degrees from an industrial arts program in Bisbee, Arizona or Athens, Georgia. Moreover, the terms occupational and nonoccupational can not be interpreted in an exclusionary sense implying that only occupationally specific skills are taught under the former label and that no such skills

are taught under the latter. Yet, there are differences in purpose and emphasis. An industrial arts program is not directed toward preparing an individual for a specific occupation. Similarly, there is no assurance that a student successfully completing a specific occupational program will have acquired the values and attitudes necessary to understand the interpersonal aspects of an occupation. The key question is--are these non-occupationally specific outcomes just ancillary bonuses in a vocational program, or are some of them core competencies which may even supersede in importance the technical proficiency skills? The issue is certainly not one of occupational versus nonoccupational outcomes; rather, it is one of striving for an appropriate mix.

Enhancing Vocational Knowledge and Maturity

The day of the straight line career, that is, the career which lasts from youth until retirement has rarely existed and is even less likely in the future. The necessity of making several occupational changes over the course of one's lifetime is the most likely reality, and because of that reality, the importance of providing general vocational knowledge to the student is an issue.

As used in this paper the term vocational knowledge and maturity includes a variety of different types of activities. For example, the recent emphasis on the elimination of sex stereotyping in vocational education programs increases student options and awareness regarding nontraditional careers. Vocational guidance at the secondary level assists in developing occupational decision-making skills and is a vehicle for providing occupational information. Industrial arts programs afford students the opportunity to explore facets of a number of different trade and industrial occupations while acquiring general technical skills related to evaluating and using tools and machines. In addition, special career exploration programs are provided to assist students in exploring different occupations both in the classroom setting and at the work site. Each of these activities has a distinct purpose and emphasis; however, they all tend to contribute to the overall career development of the individual.

Federal Involvement

The most explicit example of the federal government promoting services designed to increase vocational knowledge and maturity is found in subpart three of P.L. 94-482. Section 134 sets aside 4 percent of the total basic grant to be used for vocational guidance and counseling. The language of that category also states that section 134 funds can be expended for vocational exploration programs. Subpart three also contains

sections that deal with research, curriculum development, exemplary programs, personnel development, and elimination of sex bias and stereotyping. Although vocational knowledge and maturity are not specifically noted in these sections, funds allocated through these sections can be used to support programs directed at enhancing vocational knowledge and maturity. According to a recent report of vocational education research and development activities, 38 percent of the abstracts of state operated/federally funded research, curriculum and exemplary projects collected by the National Center Data System during the first six months of 1979 were in the area of career development (Lewis and Jesser 1980).

In addition to the emphasis given in subpart three, subpart two of the legislation authorizes expenditure of funds for industrial arts programs. The language of subpart two is also very specific in encouraging the allocation of funds for information, services, and activities related to reducing sex bias and stereotyping, including the mandating of $50,000 for the establishment of a sex equity coordinator in each state department of education.

In summary, several provisions in the federal legislation encourage the expenditure of funds for activities related to enhancing an individual's vocational knowledge and maturity, and still other provisions, while not directly encouraging these activities, do not prohibit them.

Background Data

For most of these activities, no nationally valid data exist that provide an indication of the number of clients served. For example, no data are available on the number of students receiving vocational guidance services or the number of students benefiting from vocational education's efforts in the area of sex equity. Indeed, the cost of acquiring viable data is probably prohibitive since the definitional problems are, in these cases, particularly difficult.

One area for which national data are available is industrial arts. During the 1978-79 school year over 1.6 million students were enrolled in industrial arts programs which received some federal funding. This constituted almost 16 percent of the total secondary enrollment (below grade eleven and in grades eleven through twelve) in vocational education (National Center for Education Statistics 1980, Table 5). In reference to another area, career exploration, an analysis of the NLS--New Youth Cohort Data (special subsample of students age seventeen to twenty-one for which transcript data are available) suggests that approximately 8 percent of students who took a substantial number of vocational education courses, also took at least nine weeks of career exploration coursework. This is a conservative estimate

of the total number of students who are involved in career exploration activities since it does not reflect the time spent on career exploration in occupationally specific training courses.

Developing Employability Skills

Few would question the notion that the possession of specific occupational skills contributes to one's employability. There are those who would argue, however, that employability is first and foremost a function of attitudes, habits, deportment, and general intellectual and manipulative skills (Mangum and Walsh 1980).

Employability skills are those skills and attributes that are not occupationally specific but are required to gain and hold employment. This would include detailed skills such as resume writing and job interviewing, as well as general skills in job search and, perhaps most importantly for labor market success, work adjustment skills and attributes such as developing self-motivation, arriving at work on time, working with others, and getting along within the authority structure.

Federal Involvement

Many of the legislative provisions supporting efforts to increase vocational knowledge and maturity can also be applied to developing employability skills. For example, counseling services funded under section 134 (P.L. 94-482) can legitimately be directed toward helping youth come to a better self-understanding, recognizing the type of conduct expected by employers, and developing a reputation for diligence and stability. These activities all contribute to overall employability. In addition, subpart three funds authorized for research, curriculum development, exemplary programs, personnel development, and sex equity can be used for efforts in this area.

Funds for support services and other special programs authorized under subpart two of the legislation, and designed to assist individuals in overcoming the obstacles created by sex stereotyping and bias, can also be employed to assist in developing employability skills. In general, the federal legislation does not mandate expenditure of funds for the development of employability skills but does enable monies to be directed toward these types of efforts.

Background Data

No extensive national data are available on the number of vocational education students receiving training regarding employability skills. A major reason for the lack of available data is that most instruction related to employability skills is embedded in the curriculum of other vocational courses. However, in regard to the order of magnitude in this area, a reasonable speculation would be that most vocational programs contain some material on employability skills and some programs, particularly areas like marketing and distributive education, contain a substantial emphasis.

Consumer and Other Self-Help Skills

Although a number of the occupational program areas such as marketing and distributive education and agriculture address topics related to consumerism, the major vocational education delivery system for consumer and other related self-help skills is home economics. This discussion will, therefore, focus on that area. Two major subdivisions exist within the field of home economics--occupational home economics and consumer and homemaking education (nonoccupational home economics). Relative to its general purpose, occupational home economics resembles the other occupational areas of vocational education such as agriculture and trade and industrial. On the other hand, consumer and homemaking education has a different purpose.

In the broadest of terms, the purpose of consumer and homemaking education is the improvement of life for the individual and family. This purpose is accomplished through a variety of activities and programs. The following areas are covered in consumer and homemaking education: foods and nutrition, clothing and textiles, housing and home management, family relations, child development, and consumer education.

Federal Involvement

The federal government has a long history of commitment to providing support for consumer and homemaking education. In P.L. 94-482, a separate subpart was included for funding consumer and homemaking. The monies appropriated for subpart five can only be used for consumer and homemaking activities and the federal government indicated a substantial support for this subpart by authorizing $80,000,000 for appropriation for fiscal year 1982. This commitment was unique since the federal legislation did not establish separate appropriations for any of the other program areas of vocational education (agriculture, business and office education, and so forth).

Background Data

While it is difficult to estimate the number of students involved in many of the activities under the first two categories in this section, this is not the case with regard to consumer and homemaking. In the 1978-79 school year approximately 2.8 million students were enrolled in consumer and homemaking programs which received some federal funding. This constituted almost 27 percent of the total 1978-79 secondary (below grade 11 and in grades 11-12) enrollment in vocational education (National Center for Education Statistics 1980, Table 5).

It is also interesting to note that the impact of consumer and homemaking programs is not limited to women. Due to a variety of factors, the number of males attracted to secondary school consumer and homemaking programs has increased to a level where they now comprise approximately 20 percent of the enrollment (Hughes 1980).

Citizenship and Leadership

Although skills related to the areas of citizenship and leadership are addressed in a number of different ways, a particularly important delivery system for these skills is the vocational student organization. Each of the vocational program areas has an associated student organization. Future Farmers of America (FFA), for example, is the student organization for agriculture. Although differences exist among the organizations, the goals and objectives are similar and include helping students gain leadership skills, civic consciousness, vocational understanding, social intelligence, thrift, scholarship, spirit of competition, understanding of ethics, and respect for work (Harris and Sweet 1981). An attempt is made to develop these skills and attributes within both a personal and professional context.

Federal Involvement

Although they are not highlighted in P.L. 94-482, the federal legislation does recognize student organizations and enables states to spend federal funds for their support. Subpart two of the basic grant permits the expenditure of funds for selected student organization activities when the activities are an integral part of the vocational education program.

Background Data

Some student organizations have been in existence for a long time; for example, FFA had its first national convention in 1928, while others, such as the Health Occupations of America founded

in 1976, came into existence more recently. Today, approximately 1.6 million secondary students participate in vocational student organizations. The average student membership per chapter across the various organizations ranges from twenty-one students for the Office Education Association, to a sixty-four student average per chapter for the Future Farmers of America (Vocational Student Organizations 1981). Analysis of the High School and Beyond survey also provides some indication of involvement in vocational student organizations. The data indicate that in the spring of 1980, 34 percent of the sophomores and 39 percent of the seniors who reported they were vocational students also reported they participated in vocational clubs.

Summary

As noted earlier, the nature of secondary vocational education is neither straightforward nor simple. In the first place, the labels occupational and nonoccupational are misleading if they are interpreted to mean that only occupationally specific skills are taught under the former label and that no such skills are taught under the latter. Second, it is inappropriate to equate the two dichotomies--occupationally specific versus non-occupationally specific and economic versus noneconomic. Whether skills related to attributes such as leadership and work adjustment have a more or less positive economic affect than occupationally specific skills is simply not clear. It is clear, however, that secondary vocational education provides a mixture of specific and general skills for gainful employment, as well as for other life roles. In fact, at least one-half of all secondary vocational students are in non-occupationally specific programs. According to the interim report of the National Institute of Education, the estimates for non-occupationally specific enrollment vary from 52 percent according to the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education 1978 data, to 53 percent according to the Office of Civil Rights 1979 Survey, to 70 percent for the 1979 VEDS data. This latter percentage is higher due to the fact that all vocational enrollment below grade eleven was counted as nonoccupational (National Institute of Education 1980).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

From a pragmatic viewpoint, the issue of whether or not secondary vocational education should pursue non-occupationally specific outcomes is not particularly pertinent. It does address these outcomes--often on a very explicit and widespread basis as seen in consumer and homemaking education, industrial arts, and vocational student organizations. In other areas, competencies such as vocational maturity, attitudes toward work, job seeking/advancement strategies are embedded in some fashion in many vocational education offerings. The more relevant policy

issue is whether some of these outcomes should be explicitly endorsed and supported--especially through the federal role. The attendant question, then, becomes one of looking at the possible implications of giving increased legitimacy and emphasis to non-occupationally specific outcomes.

As a context for examining this issue, the following features of secondary vocational education appear salient: (1) the primary public expectation for secondary vocational education is occupational preparation; (2) yet, substantial numbers of public secondary vocational education students are not enrolled in occupationally specific programs; (3) many of the non-occupationally specific programs are subject to expectations for demonstrating increased economic benefits; (4) for these programs the linkage between eventual economic outcomes and the immediate learner outcomes is difficult to establish; (5) yet, by virtue of their numbers and continuity, such programs appear to be viewed as legitimate and important by the general public.

Looking at the possible implications of endorsing or encouraging non-occupationally specific outcomes for secondary vocational education will necessarily involve a mixture of positive and negative consequences. The implications are both short and long range; they are quite certain in some cases and highly speculative in others; and, they range from concrete, practical matters such as facilities and equipment to the more abstract issues of public image or social equity. In the discussion to follow, the major implications are highlighted under the topics of Diversity, Productivity, Equity, Accountability, and Implementation.

Diversity

For many, the principal implication of increasing the emphasis on non-occupationally specific outcomes is that it should increase the flexibility and breadth of the preparation that youth would receive in secondary vocational education. This position implies that factors such as the increase in mid-career shifts, the movement toward an information-based job market, and rapid changes in technology will lead to a situation where occupational preparation will have a broader focus than training for proficiency in a specific job or occupation. Along these same lines, it is also argued that the extent to which flexibility is increased, there should be less concern about vocational education tracking or restricting the future choices of students. As a result, vocational education should be more appealing to those students and their parents who had previously felt that vocational education restricted chances for subsequent education or higher level jobs.

While the flexibility argument has appeal, there are several concerns which need to be considered in balancing or tempering that possible advantage. Foremost among those concerns is the supplanting issue. Here, some would argue that an increased emphasis on non-occupationlly specific outcomes competes on a one to one basis with an occupationally specific emphasis. At the extreme, this position would hold that secondary vocational education would eventually run the risk of having diluted occupational skill training to a point that secondary students would not acquire the specific technical competencies to perform the entry level requirements of the jobs. The two specific consequences which are most often brought forth as negative implications if supplanting were to occur are: (1) a loss for those for whom high school is the last likely opportunity for formal occupationally specific skill training, and (2) a loss of a separate identity for vocational education and, hence, a loss of financial support.

Although an increased emphasis on non-occupationally specific outcomes need not, necessarily, lead to a reduction in the capacity of secondary vocational education to deliver occupational skill training, the desire to increase diversity by attempting to achieve the appropriate mix between an occupational and non-occupational emphasis, as opposed to framing the solution in terms of one type of training versus another, appears to be beneficial.

Productivity

Conventional wisdom has it that employers are saying to schools: "Give us young people with appropriate work attitudes and habits; we'll train them on the job if they lack technical skills." The degree to which this opinion is universally held by business/industry personnel is unclear. Do employers actually have such a training capacity--especially those employers with under 30 employees that comprise the bulk of the youth labor market? Could employers afford to deliver such training even if the capacity existed? Why would not employers simply hire workers that are older and have both good work attributes and technical skills?

On the other hand, the type of training that would appear to be the most difficult for industry to effectively deliver would be that training related to improving work attitudes and habits. Therefore, in regard to improving productivity, many would argue the major challenge for vocational education is to seek a better understanding of the different circumstances in which youth will become employed and then translate that understanding into the appropriate mix of learning opportunities for secondary vocational education.

Equity

If the lack of appropriate work attitudes and demeanor is a substantial reason for the difficulties youth have in obtaining and keeping a job, more attention to such areas at the secondary level would be of particular benefit to disadvantaged students. Although all students should benefit, the disadvantaged student--often by definition--is one who is least likely to have been exposed to opportunities to gain an understanding and appreciation of outcome areas such as leadership, citizenship, vocational maturity and appropriate consumer and self-help behavior. An equity emphasis could be particularly important in the next decade because of changing demographics which will see higher proportions of secondary age students from minority backgrounds.

A second set of equity implications relates to the type of employment that tends to be available to youth. Much of the work available for youth in their teenage years are "youth-type" jobs that serve as a transition period before "real" employment is available. For whatever reasons that employers--especially the larger corporations--tend not to hire youth before the age of 20 or 21 in "regular" jobs (Barton 1981), more emphasis on non-occupationally specific outcomes at the secondary level may better prepare youth for the kinds of work realistically available to them for the 3-5 year transition period before more rewarding career opportunities are available. The caution is that doing so may amount to a tacit acceptance of this pattern. Ironically, it could be a further extension of a self-fulfilling prophecy which asserts that youth really don't have the skills to hold responsible jobs.

Which is the greater inequity--preparing youth for jobs unavailable to them because of their age, or accepting what many would see as a reality and, therefore, preparing youth as well as possible for the transition period to "regular jobs"?

Accountability

Explicit endorsement of the position that non-occupationally specific outcomes are separate from or at least supplemental to job placement would require the utilization of new evaluative criteria in addition to the existing labor market indicators. As difficult as it is to obtain accurate and updated information about specific occupational competencies, the development of methodologies for determining accountability in regard to outcomes such as vocational maturity, citizenship, employability and so forth will be substantially more challenging. Clearly, increased resources would have to be committed to developing and instituting such new accountability measures.

A second implication would relate to the impact an increased emphasis would have on the basic methods and assumptions used by vocational educators to identify program content. More effort would be directed toward developing an understanding of the social and organizational environments of work places. In looking more broadly at the settings in which work is performed, the criteria for identifying content would extend beyond considerations such as the criticality of tasks and the speed, accuracy and safety by which the tasks should be performed. Concerns such as interpersonal compatibility, individual growth opportunities, respect for worker and employer rights, and ethical work behavior would become more prevalent.

Recalling the earlier points that at least 50 percent of the secondary vocational students are not in occupationally specific programs and that economic criteria such as placement or wages place many non-occupationally specific programs in the position of defending or rationalizing their purposes, a principal advantage of a federal role explicity endorsing these kinds of outcomes would be encouragement and legitimacy. There could be less compliance and ritualism in the federal-state/local accountability relationship and perhaps fewer pat answers to the question of what youth should be taught in secondary vocational education.

Eventually, the accountability issue would probably come down to the question of whether secondary vocational education is meeting the expectations of the public which supports it. For example:

- Will local communities endorse non-occupationally specific outcomes and will they accept the more diffuse evidence of their attainment?

- Will vocational education be able to maintain its central identity as "preparing youth for jobs"?

Implementation

Over time, a possible shift toward more emphasis on non-occupational outcomes in secondary vocational education cannot ignore basic questions related to implementation. For example:

- What type and how much in-service or pre-service training will be needed for vocational instructors who are not trained to or do not want to teach a new set of competencies?

- Will the administrative and policy traditions and directions within vocational education permit alternative outcomes to be emphasized?

- Can the traditional Federal-SEA-LEA relationships accomodate substantial attention to outcome areas for which accountability measures are much less evident than traditional job placement rates?

- Will vocational educators and employers be able to establish an on-going exchange which permits employer expectations in regard to these types of outcomes to be accurately and fairly translated?

- Will other curricular areas permit vocational education to increase its emphasis on these types of outcomes?

ALTERNATIVE FEDERAL POLICY OPTIONS

Given the foregoing implications of emphasizing non-occupationally specific outcomes at the secondary level and assuming that the sentiment at the federal level was one of wanting to explore, endorse, or encourage such outcomes, what policy options might be considered? The underlying assumption in arraying these alternatives is that the federal investment is best realized in those circumstances where the state and local educational agencies are not likely to initiate alternative approaches without federal assistance.

Expand the Federal Definition

Regardless of specific roles that might be considered as options for the federal government, simply expanding the definition of secondary vocational education would lend legitimacy and impetus to redefining the role of secondary vocational education. In the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments the federal definition of public vocational education is:

> Organized education program . . . directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

A redefinition (for the secondary level) could be accomplished by inserting the phrase--for satisfaction and productivity in these and other life roles--after the term "employment." A definition such as this would permit the inclusion of roles such as consumer, homemaker, citizen, parent, self-directed learner, hobbyist, entrepreneur, and others that may evolve; for example, might not conservationist become a distinct and critical role for all Americans in the twenty-first century? This definition would say, in essence, that the method of secondary vocational

education is its most distinguishing feature. This approach would tend to provide the impetus for more than pat answers to the question of what are the desirable outcomes of secondary vocational education, but, would focus the specific decision authority at the state level.

Encourage Experimentation and Demonstration

Assuming that the Vocational Education Act reauthorization contains some language paralleling the 1976 Amendments, one option would be to explicitly encourage the pursuit of non-occupationally specific outcomes as an activity under a provision that is similar to the present subpart three, Program Improvement and Support Services. This approach would permit a natural experiment of sorts to be undertaken nationally. To the extent that local educational agencies want to pursue these outcomes, they would be encouraged to do so, and to the extent that they did, one could begin to gauge the magnitude and direction of these local initiatives. In essence, this option would "test the water" by observing just how ready and willing local communities really are to redefine the nature of their secondary vocational education programs. At worst, under this approach, the monies would be used for other higher priority efforts. At best, it could become a stimulus for a movement toward a new role for secondary vocational education.

Encourage Interdisciplinary Courses

Within a comprehensive high school, there are several courses of study, or disciplines, that could contribute to such outcome areas as vocational knowledge and maturity, employability, consumer and self-help, and citizenship and leadership. Vocational education could be encouraged and supported in undertaking cooperative curriculum design and teaching efforts with other such curriculum areas. Federal support of cooperative efforts would help both by enriching the content and instructional techniques in cooperatively designed and taught courses, as well as by providing the opportunity to break down the traditional barriers separating curriculum areas. If efforts in this area were successful, substantial headway could be made in attracting a wider variety of students to vocational courses, in obtaining community support for new vocational offerings, and in dispelling the image of secondary education being a labyrinth of segmented courses.

Encourage Research

To the extent that local and state vocational educators seriously consider the importance of non-occupationally specific

outcomes in their secondary programs, there will be a series of questions to be confronted. Many of these questions can be anticipated, and research can be undertaken to provide initial answers. For example, two such questions to be faced are as follows:

- o New Collaborative Approaches. How can vocational educators establish and maintain a dialogue with employers, as well as with well-informed incumbents of the other life roles (e.g., consumer, homemaker, citizen, continuing student, adult learner) for which youth are prepared in secondary vocational education programs? The nature of the dialogue is much more than just determining what youth will need to know in order to perform at entry level proficiency in these roles. To become informed in these areas will require different and probably more difficult kinds of linkages than those necessary to delineate occupationally specific tasks.

- o Measurement/Accountability Issues. A serious question that must be addressed is how to accurately and responsibly assess the extent to which outcomes have been achieved. If appropriate evaluation tools are not developed, the resultant instrumentation will either be rejected by the local program, or worse, the instrumentation will become restrictive in the sense of limiting the imagination and exploration of outcomes to only those that can easily be measured.

SUMMARY

Many of the considerations posed in this paper reflect the nature of change in any area of public education. The underlying dilemma is seen in the following questions: Can vocational education earnestly strive toward a shift in emphasis without local, state and federal endorsement? But, can those endorsements be given before it is demonstrated that the alternative emphasis is appropriate and legitimate?

REFERENCES

Barton, P. Vocations and Education Policy: A Federal Perspective. Washington, DC: National Institute for Work and Learning, 1980.

Harris, T., and Sweet, G. "Why We Believe in Vocational Student Organizations". VocEd 56, No. 6 (1981): 33-35.

Hughes, H.P. The National Census Study of Secondary Vocational Consumer and Homemaking Programs. Iowa State University Research Foundation, 1980.

Lewis, M., and Jesser, D. Recent and Current Research and Development Activity in Vocational Education. Columbus, OH: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1980.

Mangum, G., and Walsh, J. Youth Knowledge Development Report 2.2: Employment and Training Programs For Youth, What Works Best For Whom? Research on Youth Employment and Employability Development. Washington, DC: Office of Youth Programs, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, May 1980.

National Center for Education Statistics. A Statistical Overview of Vocational Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, September 1980.

National Institute of Education. The Vocational Education Study: The Interim Report. Washington, DC: Department of Education, September 1980.

Vocational Student Organizations. VocEd 56, No. 6 (1981): 39.